WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE FUTURE.

The following from the *Chicago Times*, of July 17, gives utterance to thoughts which are now stirring in many minds:

It is probable that we are to be forced, ere long to the serious consideration of how closely Christianity, as taught and practiced, is in accord with the actual spirit of its Founder. Somehow it is meeting with unexpected opposition in the world, which raises the question of whether Christianity is really Christian. We shall have to confess that it is not satisfactorily so, says an exchange. If the question was put in this form, Is Christianity Christlike? we should readily admit that it is not. It has lost, or grown weak in some of the main characteristics of its Founder. It does not adequately preach the Gospel to the poor, nor do its members seek first the kingdom of God; they do not love their brethren as themselves, nor are they touched with the feeling of others' infirmities to the degree which impels them to adequate measures of relief. While it has gained much, Christianity has also suffered in its contact with the world—it has lifted the world up immeasurably beyond its old position, but it has also been dragged down from the sublime ideal established by Jesus Christ. It must return. It cannot stoop and conquer. Its only hope of acceptance lies in maintaining itself as the one thing pure, to which men may give themselves with the assurance that there is nothing better. It seems unnecessary to say that current Christian practice does not conform to such an ideal as this. It is easy to say that Chris-

tianity is to be judged by its ideal precepts and not by the actions of its adherents. But in the practical world it is not judged by its ideal precepts—it is judged by its fruits. It will continue to be judged so. Therefore it is impossible to see how it is to succeed in extending itself much further without our broadening our conception of human brotherhood, deepening our sense of human wrongs, miseries, and sins, and without a larger degree of self-sacrifice, sympathy, and purity of life. As Canon Wilberforce says: "The only thing Christianity needs just now is Christians." And these sooner or later it will have to find. We shall be driven by increasing scepticism and indifference to raise our standard of personal fidelity to Christ and His command. Nothing will eventually be found to answer except that every Christian shall try to be a Christ. Christianity will learn to be not only Christian, but Christlike, else it cannot venture to offer itself as a remedy for human wrongs and an antidote for human fears and sorrows. It is a fact that Christianity has always made most rapid progress in those periods when its theology has been simplest and its practice purest. The creed of Christendom has never been so simple, nor its life so pure and Christ-like, as in apostolic times, when it spread so rapidly around the Mediterranean. The great Wesleyan revival originated in the feeling that the age had drifted, both in theology and in practice, very far from the teachings of Christ, and its entire strength lay in the emphatic call to greater simplicity of faith and purity of life. The Church was compelled to raise its standard of living by the same causes that are operating now, the spread of atheism among the learned, and indifference and immorality among the ignorant. The Wesleyan revival was the only answer that was ever needed or could be given to the infidelity of the eighteenth century—only it did not go far enough. There is a degree of beauty and completeness in the example of Jesus Christ never dreamed of by Wesley and his followers, and this it belongs to the Christians of our time to discover and illustrate in their lives. It will be cure enough for the infidelity and indifference of our time.

When we inquire into the causes of the weakness of modern Christianity, which we are obliged to confess is here truthfully sketched, we are compelled to specify them as mainly these:

1. A perverted conception of the salvation which Jesus brings to men. It is viewed mainly as rescue from everlasting punishment, rather than from the sins which make punishment necessary. This depreciates character. Men need to be aroused to the truth that God has no other way of saving men from the penalty of their sins, except as He lifts them out of that sinful nature to which penalty and suffering are attached. Men are saved so far as they are emancipated from the appetites and passions, the pride and selfishness and greed of their old evil nature. And this can be completely done only by the death of that nature. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts. Many people seem to look upon the atonement as a device by which a special class can slip through. Whereas, the very meaning of it is the bringing of the old nature of sin to judgment. If professing Christians refuse this judgment against themselves, and persist in living after the flesh, obeying its dictates and allowing its ideas and selfish desires to control their lives, they must reap corruption. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die." God's harvest law admits no exceptions. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Too many professing Christians expect to evade this law by a faith which shall be counted to them *instead of* righteousness. Whereas, a faith whose fruit is not unto righteousness is worthless. "Without holiness no man shall see the

Lord." Christianity must, therefore, revise its notions of what salvation consists in, and of the mode by which it is effected. It must put character, Christlikeness, in its true place, as not merely an evidence of salvation, but as of its essence.

2. It must revise its conception of the relation which the Church of Christ holds to the human race, and to the Divine plan of the world. The theology of the Reformation stifled at the outset that broad conception of human brotherhood, which this article justly states to be an essential feature in Christianity, by its narrow view of redemption. It virtually limited the atonement in its design to a small fraction of the race—the elect—leaving all the rest of mankind, dead and living, outside of its covenanted mercies. It emptied of their true meaning the great germinal promises that in Christ all the families of the earth shall be blessed, by excluding all the heathen and all the generations of the dead from any share in these promises. This it did by conceiving of the resurrection it secures to them as an unmitigated curse. And this arose from the fact that, while it rightly referred the salvation of a chosen class to the sovereign grace of God, it failed to see that the purpose of their election did not terminate upon themselves. The Church was called to be the members in that Christ-body of which He was the Head, through which these ancient promises were to be made good. They were not, therefore, separated from their human brethren by an arbitrary decree which left all the race to flounder hopelessly in the mire of sin, and to sink into the pit of an eternal hell. They were separated for their good.

They were the priesthood, the first-born in the great human family. They were the chosen channels to convey the Gospel of salvation to all who would receive it in all the world. And even towards those who did not receive it, they were to stand as the mediators of His grace and the minister of His common bounties, offering prayers and supplications and giving of thanks for all men (1 Tim. ii. 1), doing good to all men as they had opportunity, as did their Master before them, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. All this implies a brotherhood and sympathy beyond what is possible under the old and narrow view of the Church as a select circle of the redeemed in a wide circle of reprobate humanity doomed to the agonies of a hopeless and endless hell. The practical human sympathies which are extending themselves through the Church in our times are most manifest where this old theory has lost its power. Men like Charles Kingsley and Canon Wilberforce would not be possible where it maintains its sway. And yet no men are more emphatic than they in asserting the unchanging character of God's law of punishment which, both in this life and the life to come, renders to every man according to his works, and that there is no other name than the name of Jesus by which we must be saved. For such men have been led to see that God's justice and God's love change not from age to age. They are the same in all worlds. And, therefore, the great mass of humanity cannot be shut out from their embrace by the accident of death. Nor must the saving ministry of the Church be necessarily estopped by it. For her Lord died and rose

and revived again that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living.

3. And this leads further to the observation that the failure to understand this meaning and scope of her mission has made her heedless of the conditions by which alone it can be fulfilled. These are that she shall become Christlike, or, as the critic above quoted puts it, that every Christian shall seek to become a Christ. Nothing is more plain in the New Testament, and in the lives of its first great exemplars, than that death must work in us if life is to work in our fellow-men. This is the mission of self-sacrifice to which the Church is called. And that it reaches on beyond this life is plain from the fact that the dead are a part of the "all" upon whom the light of her Lord's triumph over death was to arise, and in that she, like Him, is now being baptized for the dead. It is because the Church has failed to understand the breadth and scope of her calling, her relation to the unfolding purposes of God's love to mankind, that she has been so reluctant to surrender herself to that baptism into Christ's death by which alone she can be fitted for her place in this plan. This is largely the secret of her present worldliness and feebleness. She does not realize that she is a part of the Christ-body who gives itself for the world in order to save the world. Hence the selfishness which enters into our ideas of individual salvation. Hence the so great eagerness to escape from the just punishment of our sins, and the little readiness for that death unto sin, which is not only salvation to ourselves, but makes us fit channels of it to others. And hence the broadening of the terms of sal-

vation which the Master made narrow. In the belief that her only opportunity to reach men is in the present life, and that all whom she does not now reach and save are hopelessly lost, she has sought to make the terms so easy, and the gate so broad, that thousands have pressed into her gates who have only a name to live, and who have the most meagre idea of what it is to be a Christian. So that the true Church, which is after all but a little flock, is obscured and crippled by a mass of camp-followers whose lust for the flesh-pots of Egypt has not been cured, and who infuse their worldly spirit into all her affairs.

Hence also the carnal spirit which rests content with the multiplicity of sects into which Christians are divided, in face of the fact that her Lord's last prayer for her was that she might be one in order that the world might believe and be saved. So long as these divisions in the professing Church of the one Lord are fostered, or even tolerated, so long it must continue to be only a broken vessel, unable to contain the full treasures of His life and power, and an unfit channel to convey them to the world.

And this suggests a concluding remark, that the ideal church of the future must comprehend within its benefits a wider circle of human wants and woes than those which we class as spiritual. No one who has not examined the New Testament records for the purpose can appreciate what a vast train of physical blessings followed the footsteps of our Lord's earthly ministry. Multitudes of the sick were healed, the hungry were fed, the sorrowing comforted, and even the dead were raised.

The same character of blessings abundantly marked the ministry of His apostles. These signs of the kingdom were to follow them that believe to the end of the world. Why are they now so rare? Because the body through which these blessings were to flow exists only in fragments, and it is no longer possible to so believe. The Christianity of the future will never attain to its sublime ideal nor fulfil its sublime mission until it shall separate itself from the worldly elements in which it is concealed, and come together in that unity of faith and life in Christ which shall invest it again with these powers of the world to come, and enable it to grapple with the evils of the world, physical and moral, at their sources. This sublime function the church has been set apart to fulfil. But it can only be by a fresh revelation in her and through her of the power of her ascended Lord. He must come to her and make His abode with her. But to this end she must keep His words and do what He commands. Many Christians are waiting for a second coming of Christ. Is not this the way in which we are to expect and make ready for Him? Such a coming cannot be any other than personal. Whether it will be visible to the bodily eye is an unimportant question. The spiritual eye will be open to perceive it. And it will doubtless brighten into the full orbed splendor of that day when the heavens shall be opened, and the mysteries of the unseen world shall be unveiled, and when the risen life of Christ in His saints shall change the bodies of their humiliation into the likeness of the body of His glory, and make them the centres of that administration of power and blessing by which He shall subdue all things to Himself and swallow up even death in victory.

"CHRISTIAN SCIENCE."

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A friend writes to us from the West asking us to give our opinion of this new doctrine of the origin and cure of disease, of which he seems to have witnessed some strange results in the way of restoration from sickness.

We confess that our knowledge of this subject is limited to such as we have been able to derive from newspaper paragraphs and magazine articles. The article by Dr. J. B. Buckley in *The Century* for July is the most complete review of it we have met with. Probably most of our readers have read this. Dr. Buckley is a writer whose intellectual discernment exceeds his spiritual insight. And therefore we do not consider him qualified to do full justice to such subjects as "the Faith Cure" and "the Mind Cure," both of which have been recently treated by his facile pen. And yet his digest and *résumé* of principles is always clear and useful. And we may safely accept his aid in arriving at the leading principles of this new claimant to the confidence and gratitude of mankind, called Christian Science.

1. Its first principle seems to be that "Matter has no sensation." It is non-intelligent. Christian Science assumes this as self-evident. But how do we know this? What is matter? The best definition we can think of is that it is a group of force-centres. A stone, for example, is a mass of atoms held together by certain forces to which we give the names of cohesion, chemical affinity, gravitation, etc. Each atom is a centre from which these forces operate. It is assumed that these

atoms are inert and indivisible units of substance. And yet no man ever saw an atom, or knows really what it is. All that we can take cognizance of is the forces of which the stone is a centre. These resist our attempts to compress it and give it the quality of hardness. They determine its outline and give it shape. What is the real thing in the stone? Who shall say whether it be these hypothetical atoms or these forces? If it be the forces, how do we know that they are "without sensation" and "non-intelligent?" All we can say concerning this first postulate of Christian Science, which affirms that matter is non-sentient, is that it is not proven. We know as little about matter as we do about spirit. We are not yet prepared to run a dividing line between these two realms. Scripture everywhere speaks of the forces of nature as if they were intelligent. It calls them "angels, principalities, and powers." (Col. I., 15–17; Heb. I., 7, etc.) Science will very likely have yet to revise all her theories about "dead matter." And if so, Christian Science will have to build itself upon some other corner-stone.

2. The second principle is that as matter cannot think or feel, all pain and disease is due to perverted states of the mind. Let these be rectified and disease will disappear. The theory assumes that, as man is made in the image of God, it is his privilege to assert for himself the prerogatives of such a creature; that is, to think of himself as essentially pure and sinless and immortal, and to expect these characteristics to reveal themselves in the whole region of his mind and body. Such right thinking about ourselves would banish disease, which results

from perverted thinking—from false ideas which have fastened themselves upon us, and have been inwrought into the fibre of the race. The mission of Christ was to set us right about this matter.

Now, it seems to us that this falls far short of the Bible teaching about the way in which sin entered the world, and death and disease by sin. And it reduces the saving work of Christ to such low elements as sink out of sight its characteristic grace and power. We believe that the curse of man's sin, and the condemnation that fell upon him because of it, was a diseased condition of his whole nature, body and mind, in which he lost control over those natural forces over which he was given dominion, and that something more than a new power of right thinking is necessary to restore it. Christ came to impart to men a new and eternal life. It is a gratuitious assumption that man by nature first possessed this life, and that it is inherent in him. The mission of Christ was something more than a rectification of a great mistake, or of a great disorder in human life. The life with which man was at first endowed proved itself incapable of sustaining him in his position as a child of God. Hence he must die out of this life and be raised again in the power of an endless life. The record of the Gospel is that God hath given to us this life in His Son. "Christian Science" assumes the worthiness and capability of the natural man. It denies the necessity of his death, or of the diseases that lead to it, as the wages of his sin. It virtually denies new creation and resurrection, reducing these terms to a mere rectification of the mind.

And yet, as in every form of error, there is in this system the shadow of much that is true. The way in which it exhorts us to view the material body as not of the real self, and as dead, is very like St. Paul's frequent exhortations to reckon this body of sin as dead, and ourselves as set free in spirit, and alive unto God. And its assertion of the right of the mind to dominate the body, and to bring it into subjection, even to the yoking down of its bad tempers and disorders, is only what the Christian is urged to do in the strength of the Spirit freely given to him of God. And its anticipation of a disenthralled humanity is only a crude foreshadowing of that ultimate triumph of the spiritual over the material toward which mankind and the whole creation is struggling, but which only the anointed Christ can effect. It is also to be observed that this affirmation of the supremacy of mind over disease is only an enlarged application of a principle whose curative effects has always been recognized in medical science. It is relied upon by all intelligent practitioners. It is not to be wondered at that many cures have been wrought by the mind-healers.

While therefore we do not believe that this is a heaven-ordained method for ridding the world of sin and disease, we may still regard it as a crude attempt to realize that complete subjection of matter to the control of spirit, which forms the goal of human progress, but toward which only Christ can lead, and which can be reached only as His Spirit shall take complete possession of us. We have defined matter as a group of centres of force. The body of man is a battery of nature's

forces by means of which his spirit comes into possession and control of this system of nature. Sin has robbed us of that supremacy in this system which is our birthright. "Sin is lawlessness," as St. James defines it. These forces, therefore, run riot and make havoc of human nature. Hence passion and unbridled cravings in the mind and disease in the body. Salvation is the cure of this disorder, and the final enthronement of man as the master of all these forces and the lord of this whole realm. There is no doubt that men may enter now upon the first fruits of this salvation. Their bodies may now become temples of the Holy Ghost, subdued to His sway and guarded by His power against the assaults of evil. So far as this result is realized, it follows of necessity that infirmities are neutralized and diseases warded off or overcome. Many people have been helped by the faith-cure, and some, perhaps, by the mind-cure, to a new and more worthy estimate of the dignity of our position as the sons of God, in whom His eternal life has begun to live, antagonizing the downward tendencies of our evil nature and filling the channels of our lives with His strong and remedial presence. But still the fact remains that these mortal bodies of ours are too frail and cumbrous a vehicle for that triumphant life. Hence they must be transformed, "fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to that mighty power whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." So far as Christian Science dispenses with the necessity for that change, so far it is anti-Christ. So far as it testifies, even in blindness, to the coming of a time when man in Christ shall come to his full supremacy over nature, and

his full heritage of his Father's estate, it is an unconscious yearning for His appearing.

Shall Christians, then, resort to the mind-healers? Assuredly not. The old Bible receipt is good enough for them. "Is any man afflicted? let him pray." A Christian is on low ground, indeed, who does not know that it is his privilege to lay hold by faith of the life that lives in all things, and the power that renews all things. Or, if he needs the support and stimulus to faith which kindred souls can give, let him obey that other direction: "Is any sick among you, let him send for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." As this last was a remedial measure among Orientals, it suggests to us the employment of approved remedies. We would by no means exclude the Christian physician. But the power of God residing in all of nature's forces, His resources of grace and power laid open to us in the name of the Lord, and through prayer, this is our reliance, this the agent behind all human agencies, for the healing of all our diseases.

"Christian Science" is a protest against the wide-spread confidence in medication and in mere human agents apart from the power of God which operates in all things. It is an assertion of the right of spirit to subdue and control to its uses the forces which reveal themselves to us through matter. It is a reaction against the apathy and unbelief which has come over the Christian Church which was at first endowed with the powers of the world to come. It is a blind yearning for the coming of that day when the Church shall be reunited and re-

furnished as a fit and chosen vehicle of these powers for the redemption of the world. But it is not itself the gospel of this salvation. Much less is it any substitute for it. So far as it makes this pretence, it is from beneath and not from above.

A CHINAMAN'S VIEW.

Seldom have we met with a more humiliating exposure of the shame and weakness of a divided Christianity, nor with a more convincing reason why the Church of to-day should abase itself before God and implore Him to heal its divisions, than is found in an article in the last *North American Review*, in which Wong Chin Foo, whom we take to be a Chinese student, graduated at Yale University, tells us why he remains a heathen. He is, of course, incapable of appreciating Christianity. But his article, although unfair, will serve a useful purpose in furnishing Christians some things which they need to think about.

We make from it these extracts:

The main element of all religion is the moral code controlling and regulating the relations and acts of individuals toward "God, neighbor, and self;" and this intelligent "heathenism" was taught thousands of years before Christianity existed or Jewry borrowed it. Heathenism has not lost or lessened it since. Born and raised a heathen, I learned and practised its moral and religious code; and acting thereupon I was useful to myself and many others. My conscience was clear, and my hopes as to future life were undimmed by

distracting doubt. But, when about seventeen, I was transferred to the midst of our showy Christian civilization, and at this impressible period of life Christianity presented itself to me at first under its most alluring aspects; kind Christian friends became particularly solicitous for my material and religious welfare, and I was only too willing to know the truth. But before qualifying for this high mission, the Christian doctrine I would teach had to be learned, and here on the threshold I was bewildered by the multiplicity of Christian sects, each one claiming a monopoly of the only and narrow road to heaven.

I looked into Presbyterianism only to retreat shudderingly from a belief in a merciless God who had long foreordained most of the helpless human race to an eternal hell. To preach such a doctrine to intelligent heathen would only raise in their minds doubts of my sanity, if they did not believe I was lying. Then I dipped into Baptist doctrines, but found so many sects therein of different "shells," warring over the merits of cold-water initiation and the method and time of using it, that I became disgusted with such trivialities; and the question of close communion or not, only impressed me that some were very stingy and exclusive with their bit of bread and wine, and others a little less so. Methodism struck me as a thunder-and-lightning religion—all profession and noise. You struck it, or it struck you, like a spasm,—and so you "experienced" religion. The Congregationalists deterred me with their starchiness and self-conscious true-goodness, and their desire only for high-toned affiliates. Unitarianism seemed all doubt, doubting even itself. A number of other Protestant sects based on some novelty or eccentricity—like Quakerism—I found not worth a serious study by the non-Christian. But on one point this mass of Protestant dissension cordially agreed, and that was in a united hatred of Catholicism, the older form of Christianity. And Catholicism returned with interest this animosity. It haughtily declared itself the only true Church, outside of which there was no salvation—for Protestants especially; that its

chief prelate was the personal representative of God on earth; and that he was infallible. Here was religious unity, power, and authority with a vengeance. But, in chorus, my solicitous Protestant friends beseeched me not to touch Catholicism, declaring it was worse than my heathenism—in which I agreed; but the same line of argument also convinced me that Protestantism stood in the same category. In fact, the more I studied Christianity in its various phases, and listened to the animadversions of one sect upon another, the more it all seemed to me "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals."

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Call us heathen, if you will, the Chinese are still superior in social administration and social order. Among 400,000,000 of Chinese there are fewer murders and robberies in a year than there are in New York State. True, China supports a luxurious monarch whose every whim must be gratified; yet, withal, its people are the most lightly taxed in the world, having nothing to pay but from tilled soil, rice and salt; and yet she has not a single dollar of national debt. . . . .

Christians are continually fussing about religion; they build great churches and make long prayers, and yet there is more wickedness in the neighborhood of a single church district of one thousand people in New York than among one million heathen, churchless and unsermonized. Christian talk is long and loud about how to be good and to act charitably. It is all charity, and no fraternity—"there, dog, take your crust and be thankful!" And is it, therefore, any wonder there is more heart-breaking and suicides in the single State of New York in a year than in all China?

The difference between the heathen and the Christian is that the heathen does good for the sake of doing good. With the Christian, what little good he does he does it for immediate honor and for future reward; he lends to the Lord and wants compound interest. In fact, the Christian is the worthy heir of his religious ancestors. The heathen does much and says little about it; the Christian does little good, but when he does he wants it in the papers and on his tombstone. Love

men for the good they do you is a practical Christian idea, not for the good you should do them as a matter of human duty. So Christians love the heathen; yes, the heathen's possessions; and in proportion to these the Christian's love grows in intensity. When the English wanted the Chinamen's gold and trade, they said they wanted "to open China for their missionaries." And opium was the chief, in fact, only, missiouary they looked after, when they forced the ports open. And this infamous Christian introduction among Chinamen has done more injury, social and moral, in China than all the humanitarian agencies of Christianity could remedy in 200 years. And on you, Christians, and on your greed of gold, we lay the burden of the crime resulting; of tens of millions of honest, useful men and women sent thereby to premature death after a short, miserable life, besides the physical and moral prostration it entails even where it does not prematurely kill! And this great national curse was thrust on us at the point of Christian bayonets. And you wonder why we are heathen? The only positive point Christians have impressed on heathenism is that they would sacrifice religion, honor, principle, as they do life, for—gold. And then they sanctimoniously tell the poor heathen: "You must save your soul by believing as we do!" . . . .

We heathen are a God-fearing race. Aye, we believe the whole universe-creation—whatever exists and has existed—is of God and in God, that, figuratively, the thunder is His voice and the lightning His mighty hands; that everything we do and contemplate doing is seen and known by Him; that He has created this and other worlds to effectuate beneficent, not merciless designs, and that all that He has done is for the steady, progressive benefit of the creatures whom He endowed with life and sensibility, and to whom as a consequence He owes and gives paternal care, and will give paternal compensation and justice; yet His voice will threaten and His mighty hand chastise those who deliberately disobey His sacred laws and their duty to their fellow-man.

"Do unto others as you wish they would do unto you," or

"Love your neighbor as yourself," is the great divine law which Christians and heathen alike hold, but which the Christians ignore. This is what keeps me the heathen I am! And I earnestly invite the Christians of America to come to Confucius.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE BODY.

The constant tendency of man's physical nature is to gravitate into sloth and sluggishness and consequent enfeeblement of health. This tendency is resisted by activity. Hence the value of work as a means of grace.

We need to stand guard against and beat back that languor and debility which are the result of a want of proper employment of our life-powers, and especially in God's service. There is no elixir of life for the body like the presence in it of God's Spirit. This is His saving health. This is the joy of the Lord which is our strength. It is just at this point that Satan seeks to defeat the purpose of our calling, by oppressing in us this new life from God which can vivify us in body as well as soul, and which certainly should overcome that heaviness which so clogs the spiritual life, and makes so many Christians dead lumber in the house of God where they ought to be "living stones."

And this leads up to speak further of the duty of standing guard at all the inlets and outlets of our life in the body against the invisible enemies of our salvation. Man's physical nature has long been a tramping-ground for these enemies. Satan and evil spirits enter into men

now as truly as in the days of Judas and Ananias. The prince of the power of the air is still the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. (Ephes. ii. 2.) Our bodily appetites, our mental cravings and emotions, are all inlets at which these enemies may enter. Around all the weak points of the fortress the enemy prowls. We have seen that our conflict is essentially a fight for the prize of inheritance and dominion in this vast system of God's works, Our success involves the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness, and the advancement of a new race of kings and priests in embodied immortality on to the throne of power. It is a life-struggle therefore, which provokes Satan to great rage, for his time is short. And God's word is forever settled in heaven that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. This offering of our bodies, then, upon God's altar enters into the very heart of that conflict against principalities and powers about which Paul writes, and during which he exhorts us so earnestly to stand fast, girt with the whole armor of God.

And let us never forget that, great as is this conflict, they that be for us are more than they that be against us. Jesus is our Forerunner in it all. In a body like ours, He offered unto the Father the sacrifice of a perfect human life. He, through fierce temptations, in which He agonized unto blood, subdued and held captive all these warring elements of which man's nature is the seat and bound them forever to His throne. And, through death, He gave the death-wound to him who hath power over them all. He rescued our nature, body and spirit, from his fatal dominion and raised it to the

right hand of power in the heavens. And now He is the Friend and Brother, the sympathetic High-Priest to every man who desires a like deliverance and trusts Him for it.

And let no man imagine that because this is the path of restraint and self-denial, it may be of harsh discipline, that it is therefore a way of sorrow and gloom. Rough though this path may be, it opens out, even in this world, into new and glad regions of life. For it is the carnal mind which is death. While to be spiritually-minded is even now life and peace. And beyond, this path opens out into regions of unclouded light, of everlasting dominion and fulness of joy.—*Mystery of Creation and of Man.*

A SUGGESTION.

A Presbyterian minister sends us the following:

In all the defenses I have seen, of the old dogma of eternal, endless torment, I think there is not one, even of those that claim to prove the doctrine from the Scriptures, in which there is not at least ten times as much of argument to show that the inspired Word must be so understood, as there is of solid quotation from the Word itself. Where so much pounding with the hammer of human reason is required to shape God's Word into conformity to a traditional or preconceived theory, or to weld something upon that Word to supply a supposed deficiency, are we not justified in challenging the right of such a doctrine to demand our acceptance?

Let the explicit declaration of the Westminister Confession and Catechism be written on one side; on the other side place

all the Scripture references or proof texts, with any other passages, that bear on this subject. Now is there any one in his right mind who will look carefully at the language on both sides, and then affirm that these form an equation? or that they can be made equal without adding, subtracting or transposing? And dare any Christian claim authority thus to tamper with God's Word?

In your call for a revision of the standards of this "important point," brother, you have my sincere sympathy and heartiest wishes for your success. And suffer me to suggest, by way of giving definite shape to the matter, that the amendment be made by substituting for the language of the Standards THE VERY WORDS OF HOLY WRIT in our best translation. I can see of no other way in which the whole matter can be settled beyond cavil or dispute, and surely no reasonable objection can be made by any believer in the inspiration of the Scriptures, while no one could then complain of undue restraint of his liberty, whether he holds or rejects the traditional theory.

NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

THE "INDEPENDENT" AND PROFESSOR SMYTH.—Mr. Henry C. Bowen, proprietor of the *Independent*, publishes in his paper of July 28th a correspondence between himself and Professor Smyth, in which Mr. Bowen seeks to compel the exponent of the Andover teaching to show passages from Scripture, chapter and verse, which sustain that view. Professor Smyth, who is pressed by special engagements, offers to substitute his friend and colleague, Professor E. G. Hincks, D. D., who asks the privilege of about three columns of the paper for a "review of Biblical reasons." This Mr. Bowen declines, on the ground that he only asked for and only desires plain texts, without note or comment.

We have often expressed our conviction that the Andover hypothesis of a continued probation in an intermediate state before judgment and before resurrection cannot be sustained by Scripture.

That class of interpreters fail to see that judgment is visited in and after death, and that the whole period before resurrection is penal. The fragments of the sinner's shattered being must be regathered, and a new life in manhood be conferred, before the responsibilities and privileges of another life can begin. Resurrection is redemptive. With this key the Andover professors would have no difficulty in finding an immoveable foundation in Scripture for their larger hopes. But even with their imperfect view they have not failed to see that there is a wide range of Scripture teaching which cannot be compressed within the limits of the old view.

Mr. Bowen is no theologian. He seems rather to pride himself in being a plain, common sense reader of Scripture. But he ought to know that many most important truths of Scripture are purposely veiled. They cannot adequately be presented by a mere citation of chapter and verse. This was true of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the death and resurrection of the Christ. These truths were veiled from the common understanding. Few of

either the learned or unlearned perceived them. So with our Lord's teaching about the mysteries of the kingdom. (Matt. xiii.) They were veiled in parables so that only a few spiritually enlightened and prepared souls could receive them. It is so now with the larger purposes of God's grace in the gospel of His Son. The narrow boundaries of human systems and our selfish short-sightedness have prevented us from seeing that these purposes in some way embrace all the kindreds of the earth, and that, in the execution of them, Jesus Christ will prove Himself to be Lord both of the dead and of the living. If death has forever put it out of His power to reach with any blessing the larger part of the human race who have thus far lived, then death is well nigh the victor in this universe of God. But Mr. Bowen and the class he represents seem to have no ear for all that class of Scripture teaching which set forth the fact and the scope of the Messiah's victory. If we quote to him, for example, the oft-repeated promise that in Him "all the families of the earth shall be blessed," he will reply: "Yes, but that must refer to some distant period when all nations shall be converted." Or "the reference is to blessing which now flows over in some unknown way from the full vessel of God's mercy to the heathen." And yet he is a stout contender for a theory which consigns the bulk of these from the dawn of creation to an endless hell—made endless, too, by the very arrangement by which Christ bought back the forfeited life of the human race. And so it would be idle to quote to him the many passages which show that the very proof that this Messiah is able to do His work is, that He was to invade and make conquest of all the regions of the dead, making a feast of fat things for all people by swallowing up death in victory (Ish. xxv.), ransoming even a self-destroyed Israel from Sheol (Hos. xiii.), restoring from their captivity even Sodom and Samaria (Ezek. xvi.), Moab, and Ammon (Jer. xlvii.), and so proving that He was anointed to open the prison doors and to preach deliverance to them that were bound.

Mr. Bowen is so afraid of Universalism that he will not allow the inspired writers to use universal terms in the sense that everybody else uses them. And hence the provision that "in Christ all shall be made alive," becomes in his system an infinite disaster to the greater part of the all. But why must we become Universalists in admitting blessing to all through resurrection? If this

grace comes to all, does not the great law of righteousness still reign over all? And must not men, blessed with another gift of life, be still judged by it? And must not they still be left free to choose between life and death? And will not the second death emphasize in the world to come the principle that must rule in all worlds, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," beyond which there is no promise of a second resurrection? But why, in order to hold what we all believe, that sin must in the end destroy all who perversely cleave to it, must we refuse their proper meaning to those scriptures which declare that by means of His triumph over death, and His ever-widening conquest of its domain, the Second Man shall bring blessing, through a second gift of life, to all upon whom death has passed by reason of the sin of the First Man? This life cannot be eternal life to any who do not receive Him. But it must still bring with it some blessing. Otherwise there is no glad tidings of great joy to all people in the announcement that He gave Himself a ransom for all.

Professor Briggs on Church Union.—In the following paragraphs from his article in the *Presbyterian Review* for July on this subject Professor Briggs admits the principles for which we have been contending in this magazine.

Another great barrier to the reunion of Christendom is *Subscription to elaborate creeds.* This is the great sin of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. Every one of these churches has separated subscribers from non-subscribers and occasioned the organization of dissenting churches. Lutherans, Calvinists and Arminians, and sections of the same, have been separated into different ecclesiastical organizations. These doctrinal divisions have done more than anything else to weaken Protestantism and stay its progress in Europe . . . These differences cannot be solved by conquest, but only by some higher knowledge and better adjustment of the problems involved through an advance in theological conception and definition. The question now forces itself upon earnest men whether these differences justify ecclesiastical separation, and whether they may not be left to battle their own way to success or defeat without the help of ecclesiastical fences and traditional prejudices.

He further states that the creeds of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries do not solve the great questions, especially in eschatology, which now loom up before the church. He finds the chief reason of differences to be "imperfect knowledge and an indisposition to follow the truth sincerely and without regard to consequences."

Progress is possible only by research, discussion, conflict. The more conflict the better. Battle for the truth is infinitely better than stagnation in error. Every error should be slain as soon as possible. If it be our error we should be most anxious to get rid of it. Error is our greatest foe. Truth is the most precious possession. There can be no unity save in the truth, and no perfect unity save in the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Let us unite in the truth already gained, and agree to contend in Christian love and chivalry for the truth that has not yet been sufficiently determined, having faith that in due time the Divine Spirit will make all things clear to us.

It is manifest, in the light of these principles, that the Presbyterian Church must sooner or later abandon the position that the Westminster Confession is inviolable. Enforced subscription to such long and detailed statements of Christian doctrine, however excellent, must always be a barrier to Church Union. And the assumption that they present the final truth on all these great problems, must be an increasing offense before God and man. Professor Briggs rightly affirms there must be "advance in theological conception and definition" before the different views upon these great matters which prevail among Christians can be harmonized. The "Confessions" must therefore be held open to amendment. And the obligation of ministers, and especially of Theological Professors, to always maintain and defend them must be relaxed. A Confession of Faith may be an excellent manual of instruction in those things whereunto we have attained. But if it assumes that it is already perfect, or if we treat it as if it prescribed for us and for our brethren the limits of divine knowledge, and cast out of our fold all who are searching for that higher "unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God," in which all our existing differences must disappear, then we sin against both the Church and its Head. And is it not just this evil in the church that fosters the unfaithfulness to which Professor Briggs alludes when he says that a chief cause of existing divisions is "an indisposition to follow

the truth sincerely and without regard to consequences"? When any church puts under a ban those who would reverently pursue their investigations beyond her standards, she becomes responsible for any lack of honesty in those who, in the interest of their own spiritual life and her progress, ought to speak out their convictions.

As this matter has a personal application to us we may be pardoned if we here repeat, that it was the sincere conviction that the welfare of our own church, the honesty of its ministry, and the ultimate unity of the church at large required such a movement, that led us to arraign our Standards for their wrong conception of the purpose of God in providing through Christ for a general resurrection of the dead, and for consequent defects in their eschatology. We have maintained that there are redemptive features in that provision which our Standards have wholly overlooked. For all but the elect, they make this gift of another life wholly retributive. That we may have made some mistakes in the detailed exposition of this principle is quite possible. But of the truth of the principle itself we are sure. The question now is, Is the church so far ready to accept Professor Briggs' principles as to tolerate us in this discussion? He admits, as do all thoughtful men in all branches of the church, that the great problems of human destiny under this divine scheme of creation and redemption have not yet been satisfactorily solved. He pleads for the right to "contend in Christian love and chivalry for the truth that has not yet been sufficiently determined, having faith that in due time the Divine Spirit will make all things clear to us." Is our church ready to admit this right, in her own interest, and in the interest of that larger unity about which so many Christian hearts and consciences are now burdened? That is the question we are now putting to the test. May God give the Presbyterian Church grace and wisdom to decide it aright.

THE POINT OF VIEW.—It makes a vast difference in studying the Scriptures, as revealing the purposes of God toward mankind, what point of view one occupies; whether or not it is assumed that goodness is at the heart of things in this system of the world.

WAS IT A MISTAKE?—One of our theological professors whom we met in our summer travels, and in whose friendly and liberal spirit we have great confidence, sought to convince us that we had made a serious mistake in arraigning the Standards at this point, and that our effort should have been to show that the things we have been contending for may be embraced within their limits. He claimed that all that is essential in their doctrine of eternal punishment may be included in our view of the harvest law of resurrection. It was argued that even though resurrection be redemptive, which he could not very well deny, yet if it gather up the fruits of evil character, the consequent degradation of being and loss of full blessedness would be a source of endless torment.

We have, indeed, strongly insisted upon these features of the "resurrection of judgment." At the same time we cannot conceal the fact that if resurrection be a result of the redeeming work of Him through whom the free gift of another life came upon all men, then it must bring with it some power of rescue from the unfavorable circumstances under which, according to this law of harvest, it is conferred. But our Standards rigidly exclude any kind of redemptive features from the work of God in raising the unjust. They are raised out of hell for a trial and judgment which has been virtually already rendered, and, *for the sins of this life,* are thrust back to hell to suffer "most grievous and unspeakable torments, without intermission, with the devil and his angels in hell-fire forever." This representation obscures the character of resurrection as a recovery out of death to another life. It makes the re-embodiment of the unjust an added degradation and an unspeakable calamity. It is bestowed simply for confirmation and doubling of torment, which survives the second death and never ends. We are compelled therefore to believe that God's provision to raise all men out of the pit of death into which it was cast by the sin of the first man is, to countless multitudes of the race, an infinite curse. To our minds it is worse than useless, it is dishonest crawling, to attempt to twist and enlarge these statements of the Standards to make room for anything redemptive in their resurrection. They make it wholly retributive. And therefore we should be false to our convictions, and to the best interests of the church we seek to serve, did we not urge upon her attention this incongruity.

And here we are constrained to say that emancipation and honest freedom and growth in the knowledge of God toward the perfection of the one body of Christ will never be possible until our church consents to put her Standards where they themselves claim they ought to be put, beneath the Word and Spirit of God, and subject at all times to discussion and amendment as He may give increasing light. To some of our brethren the Standards have become almost a fetish. They are enslaved by them to an extent of which they are not aware. They are beguiled into evasions and even dissimulations which lower the tone of both intellectual and spiritual life in ways they do not suspect. They will allow liberties of thought in themselves and others which stretch the limits of the Standards beyond all legitimate lines. But the moment anyone suggests that it would be far more consistent and honest for the church to revise the Standards they are up in arms. Is not this a reverence of creed and system above Christ? Is this giving Him the lawful place in His own Church? Is this the way to honor His Spirit given to guide us into all truth and to show us things to come?

For these reasons we believe we have made no mistake, and that no higher service is demanded in the Presbyterian Church at this time than one which shall compel her to ask again before God, "Are these formulas which we have received as an heritage from the seventeenth century concerning the final results of God's dealings with mankind such as our church ought now to set before the world as her authorized testimony upon a matter of such tremendous import?"

Evolution.—We are pleased to see that a leading evolutionist, Mr. John A. Symonds, in a recent article in the *Fortnightly Review*, puts himself thus squarely upon theistic ground:

By convincing us that the universe is one homogeneous whole, in which nothing can be lost and unaccounted for, through which there runs a continuity of energizing forces, and of which we are indisputably conscious members, science has not eliminated the conception of a Deity, or effaced the noble humanities secured for us by many centuries of Christian faith. It cannot be too emphatically insisted upon, that much-dreaded Darwinism leaves the theo-

logical belief in a divine spirit untouched. God is not less God, nor is creative energy less creative, because we are led to suppose that a lengthy instead of a sudden method was employed in the production of the Kosmos.

We have not been eager to take sides in the grave questions which have been forced upon our attention by this new doctrine of creation. The evidence for it is not yet all in. We cannot, however, shut our eyes to the fact that it has proved strong enough to win over to its side the large majority of scientific inquirers, and that some thoughtful Christian philosophers accept its leading principle, without, however, abating in the least their loyalty to the accepted truths of our holy faith. That a clarified light will yet be thrown by this doctrine upon important subjects we are prepared to believe. But it will be when it has rid itself of all its atheistic and materialistic accompaniments. And we are glad to see such signs of this as the above extract affords.

It is with pain, therefore, that we read such words as these in the last number of *The Truth*, that "an evolutionist is bound to be an infidel." When will men see that the truth of God's word is a very different thing from the truth of their understanding of it.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

From a Pennsylvania pastor:

I have just received the July number, and send you congratulations in the first response made by the West Jersey Presbytery to your request for advice. I sincerely trust that answer No. 2 may be equally favorable. That letter from the Free Church Professor is full of encouragement. To those of us who are awaiting the recognition and establishment of the spirit of toleration in our Church—our future course depending upon the issue—the multiplying evidences of progress in theological thought are peculiarly gratifying. May God greatly bless and prosper you in your important work.

From another in this State:

God speed you in your work of reconciliation.

In my absence I met with an intelligent and thoughtful young lady, conversation with whom led to my reading to her considerable portions of your July number. She was deeply interested, and thought your reasonings out of the Scriptures weighty and powerful.

I have just read the August number—a good, strong one. I am anxious to have Spurgeon read the July and August numbers. and will help to send them. I think if he begins to read, he'll read on, and then I can't see how he can evade the force of your Scripture argument. If he thinks your position untenable, I should like to see his refutation of it.

From a Co-Presbyter:

Until the Church realizes that there is something worse even than being "agitated;" until it is forced into a position where crying "peace, peace," when there is no peace, will be impossible, the *real* questions at issue will be held in the background; and as at Andover, the decision will be not upon the merits of the *truth at stake*, but upon the conformity of one's teaching to the artificial standards, conventionally interpreted.

You saw how the "Board of Visitors" did not undertake to say whether Professor Smyth and others were "scriptural" or not, but only whether they squared with the "seminary creed." Meanwhile, it does seem to me that you are to be congratulated (so is the Church on your behalf, if they but knew it)—first, upon having definite and clear-cut views where there is so much prevalent fog; and secondly, upon having given to the Church at large so scripturally definite an expression of those views. The theory that a man is not called upon to *resign* rather grows upon me. If the Presbyterian Church *is* only the petty, voluntary society that men would make it in their administration of its government, then we ought to be carefully instructed in that fact, in youth, and ere we give our subscription; not join it under the impression that it is over us with a broad, maternal relationship which *we* can neither make or unmake.

A friend writes from Chicago:

I thought I would like to tell you what a minister, to whom I loaned the volumes of your magazine, says of it. After speaking of various features in them, he adds: "In all these particulars, and in many more, the books are a real help to me. I read them with much interest, and although I cannot say that I accept all the writer says, yet I can say that the spirit in which he writes is the true one, and shows where light must at last come from. I can also say in regard to the details of exposition which I find in the volumes, that of all details and of all plans which I know, they seem the most probable and natural. I am sure the books will do you good, and above all things, give you a truer idea of our Father in Heaven."

PRAYER.

O God, who hast knit together all who havc been baptized in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ into one mystical body, bless, we beseech thee, the one body of the one Lord, Carry each member of it safely through his appointed trial and discipline. Replenish it with all Heavenly gifts and graces. Heal its dissensions and divisions. Let the power of Thy Spirit be manifest in all its holy offices and ministries; that so taught and guided and governed by Thee, we may all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. So shall we evermore offer unto Thy Holy Name the incense of true praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.